Montesquiu Declaration
on land stewardship

Castell de Montesquiu (Osona)
11 November 2000
Montesquiu Declaration on land stewardship in Catalonia

The attendants to the International workshop on land stewardship held at Castell de Montesquiu from 9 to 12 November 2000: members of public and private institutions and organisations from the rural, naturalistic, land stewardship, official and research areas, and individual people interested in managing and conservation of the land, landscape and habitats in Catalunya, together with the representative speakers from Canada, France, Italy and USA,

have adopted the following Declaration:

**Land stewardship** is defined as the various strategies (educational, management, community development...) aimed to support and make possible the landowners and land users responsibility on conservation and the sustainable use of the terrestrial, river and marine environments and their natural resources, by the owners and users of these environments, and it is mainly addressed to private property.

We acknowledge the value and the opportunity land stewardship has for Catalonia, considering that:

- In Catalonia, about 90% of the rural and natural areas is in private property.
- The countryside has been subject to several impairment processes through history, but in general it has been under management practices that can be considered as land stewardship. Time has come to find new management directions to preserve these areas in the future.
- The protected natural areas often are isolated and cannot assure the ecological process of the whole landscape.
- Public management and legislation on natural resources (water, coasts, urbanism and land planning, rural and natural areas, hunting, fishing, etc.) can use land stewardship as a complementary tool for their action. Thus, land stewardship needs of the actual public action and support and does not want to replace it in any case.
- Land stewardship is based on the voluntary basis for all parts implied in its implementation: property, civil society and government.
- This volunteer feature is strengthened with education, information, participation, decision making and the partnership work between the parts.
- Land stewardship has proved and still does its efficiency in the management and sound use of land in countries with varied social, economic and legal models, such as Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Tchec Republic, the United Kingdom or the USA.
- Several catalan NGOs and private foundations are already responsible of some natural areas, with different kinds of ownership and management
agreements.

The legislative and land-planning context in Catalonia contain useful tools for the implementation of land stewardship, some of which are already in use, such as:

- Opportunities for landowners to declare natural parks and preserves, as well as for local administrations with urbanistic responsibilities, and the possibility to define forest areas with non extensive forest species, all described in Act 12/1985 for Natural areas.
- Private properties declared as wildlife preserve, as described in Act 3/1988 for wildlife protection.
- Tax implications on conveyance of rural properties included in protected areas, and of the rural forest properties with approved plans (land tax, sales tax, inheritance and donation taxes, personal tax)
- The co-operation agreements established by some protected areas, by which the private property assigns the total or partial management of their lands for conservation for a period of time.
- Urban management and planning of protected lands, where development is not allowed, that some town councils have initiated.
- Different protection methods for landscape and ecological areas and of natural spaces with local, regional or national interest, such as special plans, partnerships, agreements or the protection strategic frames.
- The instruments that give support to the sustainable use of the land under the frame of the European program on rural development.
- The committees and instruments of the public administration participated by the private property.

Land stewardship, as a group of tools to propitiate private sector implication in land conservation, has the following main goals:

- A tax and legislative frame that enable the establishment of land stewardship initiatives in community and private properties, in accordance with the principle of less tax burden for the generation of more environmental services and benefits.
- Creation of partnerships between public and private sector and non-official institutions based on reliance and co-operation.
- Education, training and participation of all people involved in land stewardship, specially addressed to: landowners, people with knowledge on countryside, landscape and marine environments, NGOs and stewardship professionals, government employees, political representatives and to all the people.
- Availability of economic and tax resources needed to consolidate land
Consequently, and in order to progress in land stewardship in Catalonia it is convenient to:

- Start trial land stewardship programs based in such mechanisms as Landowner contacts directed to reach verbal agreements or the Co-operation covenants, a more formal procedure, with contracts between private property and a second part (organism, government, etc.)
- Closely study of the existing legislative frame and propose legal reforms that facilitate the land stewardship tools regarding the possible incentives for property and for developing stewardship organisations.
- Maintain an up-to-date catalogue of the incentives (economic, material, social) for land conservation in private properties.
- Establish an up-to-date catalogue of the existing leaderships on land stewardship and knowing the social attitude they induce, in a parallel process of education of the people and of improving the efficiency of the leaderships.
- Start a Catalan net of land stewardship, based in brochures addressed to different group action, web sites and electronic lists, publications, workshops, discussions and other appropriate tools.
- Have constant exchange of information with experts from other countries where land stewardship is already established (Australia, North America, United Kingdom...) or is developing (Eastern Europe, Latin America).
- Reach consensus on a working strategy between the different public and private organisations to reach the former objectives.

The signing organisations, and others willing to join, will promote the development of the Xarxa Catalana de Custòdia del Territori (Catalan net on land stewardship).

The promoters will watch over the development of the Xarxa Catalana de Custòdia del Territori and the edition of incentives and leaderships on land stewardship.

The Council of nature protection, as a consulting body to the Catalan administration and the Parliament in nature protection matters, will be able to make use of its functions in consulting and promoting land stewardship.

The attendants to The International Workshop on land stewardship give our approval to this Declaració de Montesquiu and commit us to circulate it among our daily work and relationship and to watch over its establishment.

The promoters of the Xarxa Catalana de Custòdia del Territori commit ourselves to
circulate this *Declaració de Montesquiu* and to ask the government institutions and public responsible to subscribe it, as well as promoting other close geographical areas to adopt similar declarations.

Castell de Montesquiu, 11 November 2000
## Signing organisations (updated to July 2002)

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<th>Organisation</th>
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<td>Ajuntament del Bruc</td>
<td>Fundació Natura</td>
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<td>Ajuntament de Cerdanyola del Vallès</td>
<td>Fundació Territori i Paisatge</td>
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<td>Ajuntament de Mollet del Vallès</td>
<td>Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre</td>
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<td>Ajuntament de Salou</td>
<td>(Cantabria)</td>
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<td>Associació Balear d'Amics dels Parcs</td>
<td>Generalitat de Catalunya,</td>
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<td>Associació Catalana de Ciències Ambientals</td>
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<td>Associació Hábitats, Projecte Rius</td>
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<td>Associació de Naturalistes de Girona</td>
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<td>Centre d'Estudis dels Rius Mediterranis</td>
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<td>Centre d’Història Natural de la Conca de Barberà</td>
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<td>Centre de la Propietat Forestal</td>
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<td>Centre for Land &amp; Water Stewardship (Canadá)</td>
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<td>Consorci Forestal de Catalunya</td>
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<td>Coordinadora per a la Salvaguarda del Montseny</td>
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<td>DEPANA</td>
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<td>Departament de Geografía, Universitat</td>
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<td>Autònoma de Barcelona</td>
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<td>Diputació de Barcelona, Area d’Espais Naturals</td>
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<td>Els Verds d’El vissa</td>
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<td>Escola Superior d’Enginyeria Forestal, Universitat de Lleida</td>
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<td>Essex County Greenbelt Association (EUA)</td>
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<td>Federació Catalana de Pesca Esportiva i Càtинг</td>
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The Parliament of Catalonia accorded to support the “promotion of land stewardship (...) by means of different strategies, such as legislative and tax measures, capacity building and budget availability, amongst others” by means of Motion 112/VI of the Parliament of Catalonia on management of natural areas, approved with the positive vote of all political groups in Session number 39, on the 28.06.2001.
Attendants to the International workshop on Land stewardship

Vicens Acuña
Roger Arquimbau
Ed Becker
Jordi Bellapart
Pierre Bougeant
Josep Lluís Bruna
Joan Buades
Jordi Camprodon
Marta Camps
Eugenio Capella
Carles Carboneras
Xavier Carceller
Marta Carola
Antoni Carola
Albert Cortina
Martí Domènech
Mª Lluïsa Dubon
Ramon Espinach
Joan Estrada
Esther Fanlo
Elena Fernández-Argüeso
Ramon Ferré
Bet Font
Ramon Fortià
Marc Gràcia
Josep Germà
Leopoldo Gil
Pere Josep Giménez
Francesc Giró
Marcel Gómez
Josep Gordi
César Gutiérrez
Dr. Stewart G. Hilts
Xavier Jiménez
Joan Jou
Josep Mª Mallarach
Xavier Mateu
Joan Mayol
Ferran Miralles
Brent Mitchell
Josep Ramon Moragrega
Núria Morral
Manel Nadal
Sergi Nuss
Lluís Paluzié
Jordi Pietx
Pere Pous
Albert Puigvert
Miquel Rafa
Josep Mª de Ribot
Cinta Roca
Tammara van Ryn
Cristina Sánchez
Marc Sanjuan
Jordi Sargatal
Jaume Solé
Gaby Susanna
Miquel Ventura